

## Two-way radio standards can enhance public safety

GTA is helping to ensure that law enforcement and other public safety entities can communicate with each other in an emergency.

GTA adopted statewide standards in January to promote the interoperability of two-way radio communications for future statewide and local government systems.

Use of the standards is mandatory for state agencies but optional for local governments. The standards encourage all public safety agencies in proximity to each other to work together in designing and implementing their communication systems.

The state's **CIO Council** and several state agencies were involved in developing the standards, including the **Department of Public Safety**, the **Department of Natural Resources**,

the **Department of Transportation** and the **Department of Corrections**.

One set of standards addresses the special concerns of public safety agencies, such as police, fire, emergency medical, emergency management and other organizations involved with enforcing state or local laws.

A second set of standards is for agencies not directly involved in public safety, such as educational facilities, building maintenance departments, field personnel, parks officials and inspectors.

Once common systems are available, law enforcement and first responders who use radios meeting the standards will be able to talk to each other regardless of the frequency of their radios and without the intervention of a dispatcher, said Wray Hall, who oversees two-way radios for GTA.

Entities using compatible equipment will be able to operate on one radio system or each other's radio systems, thereby benefiting from transparent connectivity. Systems operating in a different part of the radio spectrum will connect to each other through a switching station. The Federal Bureau of Investigation operates a switching facility in metropolitan Atlanta that can be used by other law

See **Two-way radio**, page 3

## State IT expenditures total \$434.9 million in FY 2003

State agencies reported spending a total of \$434.9 million on information technology during FY 2003.

This and related findings are contained in GTA's annual IT expenditures report, which provides detailed information for each state agency. GTA issued the report in December 2003.

State funds accounted for \$236.9 million of the total amount spent on IT resources. The remainder came primarily from the federal government.

The largest amount—\$178.5 million or 41 percent of total expenditures—was spent on health and human services. Other service categories, amounts and percentages are

- general government: \$95.3 million or 21.9 percent
- public safety: \$66.3 million or 15.2 percent

See **IT expenditures**, page 3

### Volume 3, No. 2

## Inside this issue

**Changing customer relationships for the better** ..... Page 2

**New portal services** ..... Page 3

**Georgia's online business registration receives national recognition.** ..... Page 4

*Bringing the benefits of technology to Georgia government*

## On the fast track Changing customer relationships for the better

*"We have to do what it takes to make it easy for customers to do business with us."*

That's how Crystal Armstrong sums up GTA's initiative to improve customer interactions. Ms. Armstrong has been working with others in GTA on the project for several months. She's also a section director who oversees a group of account managers.

"The energy behind this effort keeps me excited about it," Ms. Armstrong said. "We're gaining momentum to change the way we interact with customers."

Momentum is something Ms. Armstrong knows a little about.

As members of the National Hot Rod Association, Ms. Armstrong and her husband, Mark, are avid drag racers. They take their 1970 Dodge Dart to drag racing competitions across the Southeast.

Ms. Armstrong sees many similarities between her career and seemingly unrelated passion for racing. "Racing is fast, and IT changes fast. On the track it's exciting to win, and it's just as exciting to succeed in solving a customer's problem." After a pause, she added, "And then it's on to the next challenge."

### Time to get rolling

"This is a huge undertaking for GTA," Ms. Armstrong said. "The hardest part is prioritizing—we just can't implement everything at once."

Customer feedback is driving the changes. Data has been gathered from focus groups and in one-on-one interviews about project management,

account management, procurement and contract administration, the portal and the Agency Requests for Technology (ART) process.

"We want this initiative to help us improve the way we communicate with customers, remove any obstacles to participating on the portal and

streamline the ART process," Ms. Armstrong said, adding that GTA account managers must be well prepared to provide agencies with accurate and timely information about GTA products and services.

Ms. Armstrong sees customer input as critical. "Agencies have to have a voice. That happens in the CIO Council, advisory groups and work groups. Agencies' willingness to be honest, open and helpful has been amazing." ■

**"The excitement here is the ability to have an influence on the way IT is used in Georgia and help agencies see what technology can do. Partnering together we can do it more efficiently and often less expensively."**

**– Crystal Armstrong**



While GTA's Crystal Armstrong devotes weekdays to improving customer interactions, on the weekends she and her husband, Mark, are off to the races—literally. "On the track it's exciting to win, and it's just as exciting to succeed in solving a customer's problem," she said.

Georgia's Web portal, [www.georgia.gov](http://www.georgia.gov), adds new services and information on a regular basis. Here are some of the most recent additions.

- The **State Board of Workers' Compensation** migrated its Web site to the state's portal in January. Georgia businesses and workers can easily find and download 49 different forms. They can also download nine free publications and find instructions for ordering eight others. The board serves more than 250,000 employers and 3.8 million workers.

- The **Office of Treasury and Fiscal Services** (OTFS) migrated its Web site to the state's portal in February. OTFS provides convenient links to its Internet Participant Access System, which enables public entities to manage their Georgia Fund 1 account entirely online. Fund participants can check their balance, print statements and make contributions and withdrawals. The Georgia Fund 1 is offered to such entities as counties, municipalities, public colleges and universities, boards of education and state agencies as an investment option.

Other links enable state agencies to access online applications for requesting their allotted state funds, making certain types of interagency payments and reporting revenue collections.

---

## *IT expenditures, from page 1*

- physical and economic development: \$73.7 million or 17 percent
- education: \$21.1 million or 4.9 percent.

State law requires GTA to collect information about IT expenditures from agencies each year and compile a report for distribution to state leaders. Its purpose is to ensure accurate budgeting and accounting for IT expenditures, which include staff, hardware, software, telecommunications and data services, and computer supplies.

IT expenditures by the Board of Regents are not included in the report.

The full report is available on GTA's Web site at [www.gta.georgia.gov](http://www.gta.georgia.gov). ■

Agencies can also access monthly allotment statements and revenue collection reports.

OTFS provides a link to Georgia's Higher Education Savings Plan, a Section 529 college savings plan. Parents can open an account online, make contributions and download the forms they need to manage their account.

- The **Department of Public Safety/Georgia State Patrol** (DPS) offers services and information for Georgia's Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program (ADAP). All teenagers under the age of 18 must complete and pass the program to receive their Class D driver's license. DPS provides a schedule of ADAP classes. Using a special DPS service on the state portal, ADAP instructors can submit the names of students who successfully complete the program and print certificates.

Drivers will also find convenient links to information about traffic conditions around the state, and law enforcement officers will find a schedule for Intoxilyzer training classes, information about new laws and a list of speed-measuring devices certified by the International Association of Chiefs of Police. ■

---

## *Two-way radio, from page 1*

enforcement agencies, Mr. Hall said. The Georgia Emergency Management Agency also runs mobile switches mounted in vans that can be transported to communities experiencing an emergency, such as a tornado, hurricane or flood.

Radios meeting interoperability standards have become more prominent since September 11, 2001, Mr. Hall said. Firefighters in one of the towers of the World Trade Center did not receive an urgent message to evacuate because their radios were on a different frequency and in a different band from those on which the alert was broadcast.

In addition, GTA is scheduled to update statewide contracts for two-way radio equipment and accessories in the second quarter of 2004. The updated contracts are expected to offer different kinds of radios from multiple vendors so an agency can select the model that best meets its needs, Mr. Hall said.

The standards are available on GTA's Web site at [www.gta.georgia.gov](http://www.gta.georgia.gov). Select Policies & Standards, Network & Transport. ■

## Georgia's online business registration receives national recognition

A service on Georgia's Web portal that enables businesses to apply online for state and federal employer identification numbers has been recognized as one of the nation's top five e-government programs.

The Industry Advisory Council and the Federal CIO Council presented the Excellence.gov Award on February 5 to the **U. S. Small Business Administration** (SBA), which coordinated a pilot program to develop the service. Only two states—Georgia and Illinois—were chosen to participate in the pilot.

GTA, the Georgia **Department of Revenue** (DOR) and the **Internal Revenue Service** (IRS) worked with the SBA and EzGov Corporation to make the service available to Georgia businesses.

The service enables businesses to apply for a Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) and a Georgia sales tax identification number at the same time on Georgia's Web portal, [www.georgia.gov](http://www.georgia.gov). Businesses are immediately assigned a FEIN, and DOR mails an ID number.

The service greatly reduces the amount of time

it takes businesses to register with federal and state officials. It simplifies the process by eliminating repetitive forms and enabling businesses to satisfy several reporting requirements with one data-collection process. It also automates the sharing of information among government agencies.

"It's a great example of how government agencies can work together to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses," said Jim Van Wert, who managed the pilot at SBA. "By reducing the

**"It's a great example of how government agencies can work together to reduce the regulatory burden on small businesses."**

**— Jim Van Wert**

regulatory burden—particularly the paperwork burden—we also reduce the cost of doing business, contributing to business success and the growth of our economy."

Cost savings from the program are significant. By conservative estimates, Georgia businesses saved \$150,000-\$200,000 by registering online during the first nine months of operation. More than 5,200 Georgia businesses used the service from February 2003 to October 2003 to apply for a state sales tax identification number. About 75 percent applied at the same time for a FEIN. ■

## GTA print facility produces essential documents

If you find a check from Georgia state government in your mailbox, chances are it was printed in GTA's print facility at the state data center.

In December and January alone, the print facility printed 3 million forms and checks on deadline.

Here's a sample of the print projects:

- 1,194,500 1099 forms
- 1,152,370 payroll, financial, risk management, child support, income tax refund and sales tax checks

- 88,000 employee W-2 forms and 88,000 W-2 copies
- 739,000 voter registration confirmations printed a week before deadline

"We're committed to keeping our customers happy no matter what it takes," said Rick Butler, unit manager for print operations. "We're here 24 hours a day, seven days a week to get the job done." ■

### Fast Forward Georgia

Published bi-monthly and available online at [www.gta.georgia.gov](http://www.gta.georgia.gov)

100 Peachtree Street, Suite 2300, Atlanta, Georgia 30303

404-463-2300, FAX 404-463-2370

Paula Calhoun and Michael Clark, Editors; Hettie Smith, Designer

**Tom Wade** GTA Executive Director & State CIO , [twade@gta.ga.gov](mailto:twade@gta.ga.gov)  
**Cigdem Delano** Chief Operating Officer, [cdelano@gta.ga.gov](mailto:cdelano@gta.ga.gov)  
**Steve Nichols** Deputy Director & Chief Technology Officer, [snichols@gta.ga.gov](mailto:snichols@gta.ga.gov)  
**Chris Tomlinson** General Counsel, [ctomlinson@gta.ga.gov](mailto:ctomlinson@gta.ga.gov)

**James D. Lester III**, Chairman, GTA Board of Directors